

BY JUDY FOLEY

he Duxbury convent, St. Margaret's-by-the-sea, summer residence to the sisters who make their permanent home in Boston's Louisburg Square. Starting in 1903, when the order bought 13 acres on waterfront "for a country home for the Sisters and a house of rest for women," their Duxbury retreat has been open from June to mid-September. Over the years they acquired the chapel and more

The nuns also started a 3-year trade school program for 1,000 students and evening classes. The trade school, which teaches 10 professions from mechanics to home economics, is a new concept in Haiti. Mother Anne Marie said, "We have to give the people a chance to learn a trade."

The experience has been rewarding in itself, she said. "I found that people want to do good, and given the chance, they will. We're battered by TV news and split second advertising. People become pulverized -- everything's bad and the problems are too big. But God never asked us to solve all the problems, and most people -- like the members of the BSO -- are glad to find something good to do. Most want to believe in Something bigger than themselves, even though they may not be ready to call it God. They need to find some good in life."

...rescent home. The convent still operates a
...ler, 4-week camp for girls aged 7-11. It offers
...services, retreats, and "an open door" to those
...need. The usual summer tranquillity was
...rupted recently as the sisters celebrated St.
...garet's Day at the convent, joined by dozens of

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...the classical education system, and few skilled
...workers were being trained. There are factories
...opening up on the island, and there was a real need
...for this type of training."

In 1955, then-Sister Anne Marie was sent to Haiti.
While there, she expressed an interest "to do a little
something on the lines of music" at the school. Out
of that "little something" came the 45-piece Holy
Trinity Philharmonic Orchestra, the first in Haiti,
and later, the Holy Trinity Music School.

The dream started with 5 violins and 6 wind
instruments, all donated, and lessons by school
music teacher Hector Lominy, with the help of a
"Tune-a-Day" book, the only music material he
could find. "He put that ghastly little group together
and out of that, the impossible came about." In 1963
the orchestra played its first concert, "Grandfather's
Clock," for the First Communion motet.

"Then we realized the tremendous talent in the
children," she said. "Had we ever thought of what
we were trying to do, we might never have tried."
The call went out to Haiti and beyond for
instruments and volunteer teachers, and the
program grew.

In 1973 the orchestra, now a full 45-piece
orchestra, came to the U.S. for the centennial
celebration of St. Margaret's. Its first concert was
played at St. John's Church in Duxbury, "with its
members so little their feet could hardly touch the

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...more good on this earth than you can imagine."
The bells for noonday office began to chime, and
the sisters started to file towards the small chapel.
Mother Anne Marie stood, marking the end of the
conversation. She smiled again and offered a warm
embrace. "God be with you," she said. "And
remember, we're always open here."

She disappeared under the pine trees, and the
quiet settled back onto the convent. The workers had
left unnoticed. The traffic noises were still muffled.
Outside the confines waited deadlines and
commitments, here there was serenity, patience and
acceptance that comes with complete devotion.

It was difficult to leave.

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(St. Margaret's Convent on Washington St. is
open to the public for daily services: morning prayer
at 7 a.m., Holy Eucharist at 7:30, noonday office at
12, evening prayer at 5:30 and compline at 8:30. The
chapel is open daily from 6:30 a.m. through
compline for private prayer and meditation.)



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